

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ An assembly of two expandable threaded tubular joints, disposed symmetrically and each comprising, ~~on the one hand,~~:

a first tubular element $[(EM)]$ arranged at an end of a tube $(T1, T2)$ and comprising a first portion $[(P1)]$, provided with a male thread $[(FM)]$, and a second portion $[(P2)]$ extending said first portion and comprising

i) a first outer surface $(SE1)$,

ii) a first annular lip $[(L1)]$ having a first axial abutment surface $(SB1)$ and a first inner surface $(SI1)$ and delimited by said first outer surface $(SE1)$ over a portion of the axial length thereof, and

iii) a second abutment surface $(SB2)$, and, ~~on the other hand,~~

a second tubular element $(EF1, EF2)$ comprising

i) a female thread $[(FF)]$, matching the first male thread $[(FM)]$ and screwed thereto,

ii) a second annular lip $[(L2)]$, having a third abutment surface $(SB3)$, a second outer surface $(SE2)$, ~~capable of being~~ configured to be arranged to face said first inner surface $(SI1)$, and a second inner surface $(SI2)$, and wherein

iii) a third inner surface $(SI3)$ and a fourth axial abutment surface $(SB4)$ defining with the second outer surface $(SE2)$ an annular recess $[(LO)]$ matching and receiving the corresponding first lip $[(L1)]$, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein

said second tubular elements $(EF1, EF2)$ form two opposing ends of a female/female-type connection sleeve $[(M)]$, separated by a central portion (PCM) initially provided, over an outer surface, with an annular zone $[(G2)]$ having an initial reduced thickness selected such that the section of the sleeve $[(M)]$ in the region of this zone $[(G2)]$ is greater than or

equal to the product of the section of a common portion of said tubes (~~T1, T2~~), and ~~the efficiency of the joint, in that~~ each second abutment surface (~~SB2~~) rests against the corresponding third abutment surface (~~SB3~~) and/or in that each abutment surface (~~SB1~~) rests against the corresponding fourth abutment surface (~~SB4~~), and

~~in that wherein~~ the assembly is ~~capable of developing~~ configured to develop, after diametral expansion in the plastic deformation region, sealing interference contacts sealing the assembly.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to claim 1, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ said zone of reduced thickness $[(G2)]$ is in the form of a dish provided with a central portion having said maximum reduced thickness and lateral walls inclined at an angle of less than approximately 30°.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to claim 2, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ said angle is equal to approximately 15°.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~either~~ claim 2, ~~wherein or claim 3, characterised in that~~ said dish $[(G2)]$ extends substantially in a zone between last threads of the two female threads $[(FF)]$.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to claim 4, ~~characterised in that wherein~~ said dish $[(G2)]$ extends substantially between said third abutment surfaces (~~SB3~~) of the two second tubular elements (~~EF1, EF2~~).

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5, characterised in that~~ claim 1, wherein said second tubular element ~~[(EF)]~~ comprises, at a selected location of its third inner surface (~~SI3~~), an inner annular groove ~~[(G1)]~~ arranged substantially in the region of said first outer surface (~~SE1~~).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to claim 6, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein said groove ~~[(G1)]~~ initially comprises at least two curvilinear portions (~~C1, C2~~).

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to claim ~~[[9]]~~ 1, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein said curvilinear portions (~~C1, C2~~) initially have substantially identical radii of curvature.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to claim 8, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein said radius of curvature is initially between approximately 2 mm and approximately 20 mm.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~any one of claims 7 to 9, characterised in that~~ claim 7, wherein the two curvilinear portions (~~C1, C2~~) are separated by a substantially cylindrical central portion ~~[(PC)]~~.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~any one of claims 7 to 10, characterised in that~~ claim 7, wherein said groove ~~[(G1)]~~ initially has a radial depth ~~[(H')]~~, the maximum value of which is selected such that the material section at

the bottom of the groove $[(G1)]$ is greater than the product of the smallest section of a common portion of said tubes $(T1, T2)$, and the efficiency of the joint under tension.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 11, characterised in that~~ claim 1, wherein said male $[(FM)]$ and female $[(FF)]$ threads initially comprise threads provided with a carrier flank having a negative angle of between approximately -3° and approximately -15° .

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 12, characterised in that~~ claim 1, wherein said male $[(FM)]$ and female $[(FF)]$ threads initially comprise threads provided with a stabbing flank having a positive angle of between approximately $+10^\circ$ and approximately $+30^\circ$.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to claim 13, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein said male $[(FM)]$ and female $[(FF)]$ threads are arranged to have, after screwing and prior to expansion, an axial clearance between their stabbing flanks of between approximately 0.05 mm and approximately 0.3 mm.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 14, characterised in that~~ claim 1, wherein said male $[(FM)]$ and female $[(FF)]$ threads are selected from a group consisting of conical-type and cylindrical-type threads and are each formed over at least one tubular element portion (EM, EF) .

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 15, characterised in that~~ claim 1, wherein said first outer surface $(SE1)$ and third

inner surface (~~SI3~~) are shaped in such a way that, after expansion, a sealing interference contact is defined between a portion of each of them.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): ~~Assembly~~ The assembly according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 16, characterised in that~~ claim 1, wherein said first $[(EM)]$ and second $[(EF)]$ expandable tubular elements are shaped in such a way that, after said expansion, a sealing interference contact is defined between an inner end portion of said first lip $[(L1)]$ and said second outer surface (~~SE2~~).

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): ~~Method~~ A method for assembling two expanded tubular joints, ~~characterised in that it consists, based on an initial assembly according to any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, the method comprising,

$[[- in]]$ screwing said first (~~EM1, EM2~~) and second (~~EF1, EF2~~) expandable tubular elements until each second abutment surface (~~SB2~~) rests against the corresponding third abutment surface (~~SB3~~) and/or each first abutment surface (~~SB1~~) rests against the corresponding fourth abutment surface (~~SB4~~), and

$[[- in]]$ subjecting said assembly of expandable tubular joints to a diametral expansion in the plastic deformation region so as to develop at least one sealing interference contact between a surface of each second portion $[(P2)]$ and a corresponding surface of each second tubular element.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): ~~Method~~ The method according to claim 18, ~~characterised in that~~ wherein the radial expansion of the joint takes place at an expansion rate at least equal to 10%.

Claim 20 (New): The assembly according to claim 3, wherein said dish extends substantially in a zone between last threads of the two female threads.

Claim 21 (New): The assembly according to claim 2, wherein said second tubular element comprises, at a selected location of its third inner surface, an inner annular groove arranged substantially in the region of said first outer surface.